

Candidate's Election Address

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Why do I want to stand for General Synod?

My family have worshipped at All Saints' Kempston for generations and I first became involved in the machinery of the parish organisation in 2010: recruited as Hon. Treasurer for ten years, I remain on the PCC.

In the last few years I have been appalled by the devastation to parish finances, membership and unity resulting mainly from diocesan exploitation of the supposedly voluntary parish share system. At a local level, I am already fighting that. But this is a nationwide calamity: a threat to the whole parish system. I believe I have something constructive to contribute to a reformation of the Church's way of working that can see it both revive and thrive.

The Church is currently top-down and top-heavy: self-devouring and self-defeating. It is less than the sum of its parts. To become more than that sum it must radically reorder its resources: it is its parishes or it is nothing. It seems to be losing its focus on the essential and eternal in favour of the ephemeral, fanciful and fashionable.

The new Save the Parish Network offers the right approach to reform.

Why would you vote for me?

Primarily because I have detailed knowledge of the existential threat to our parish system and will help to protect your church by supporting the Save the Parish Network Manifesto.

Secondly, as my CV shows, I love our parish churches and will further STP objectives, which include:

- **supporting the archbishops** in keeping their pledge to support the parish;
- **putting the "frontline first"**, ensuring that resources that properly belong to and are generated by the parishes remain at parish level, freeing up laity and clergy for mission;
- **ensuring that law and projects which initiate from the centre all support and enhance the parochial system** by integrating the Strategic Development Fund into the parish and opposing the revision to the Mission & Pastoral Measure which would make it easier and quicker for the dioceses to close churches, make priests redundant, and throw priests out of their homes;
- **ensuring effective mission** by the prioritisation of spending on **good theological education** as a crucial investment: more parishes need more vicars;
- **calling** for a Church-State commission to agree to **protect and preserve historic parish buildings**.

To read the Save the Parish Network Manifesto in full, go to savetheparish.com or ask me to send you a copy.

Thirdly, my training, career and over 10 years' direct experience in PCC and Diocesan relations has given me the necessary insight and preparation for the role. The good news is that "***what***" the whole Church wants is to survive and thrive: my "CV" overleaf summarises my background and ability to contribute to identifying and implementing the "***how***" to achieve that successfully.



If elected to General Synod, I will work to ensure that "real-world" action is taken to provide the clerical and financial resources for increased local engagement to meet the unique circumstances of each parish.

Election to The House of Laity, General Synod, 2021

Who am I?

I am a life-long member of the Church of England. My family, probably Huguenot, has worshipped in All Saints' Church Kempston for generations. I am:

- used to working with organisations of all sizes and cultures from start-ups to the NHS
- a semi-retired consultant but certainly not a “managerialist”
- able to offer new perspectives and initiatives, with pragmatic approaches and solutions
- approachable, straight forward, collegiate/collaborative - but willing to challenge group-think
- confident that General Synod is the right forum to save the parish
- saved by a sense of irony, humour and proportion - useful attributes for this kind of journey.

Qualifications:

BA Honours: English Literature (with minors in Education and Religious Studies)

MA (Systems in Management) developed from “hard-engineered” MBAs, this applies Soft Systems Methodology (SSM) and Critical Systems Thinking in conflicted organisations, it encompasses the “Small is Beautiful” aspects of human activity. This “softer”, research- and evidence-based approach appears to be badly needed in the Church.

Commercial background:

1970s: Early life from management accountancy to business development of Volvo car dealerships.

1980s to 2015: Consultancy in strategic business/organisation planning and systems implementation and, 2000 on, fire safety management.

Clients ranged across small and public companies; local government; government agencies; NHS and private hospitals; hotels, schools and colleges.

Charitable background:

All Saints' Church Kempston PCC: 2010 – present; Hon. Treasurer to 2019.

Worked with and for PCC in the setting-up of two businesses which provide increased community engagement and also a financial contribution to replace diminishing gift income.

Fundraising support for the purchase of “new” church bells.

Organisation of occasional concerts, annual fete and other events.

The Friends of All Saints' Church Kempston: 2015 to present; Trustee

A small charity supporting the maintenance of the church.

We3 Charity: Secretary 1995 – present

A small charity delivering or supporting Education, Employment and Enterprise Projects

Rotary Clubs: since 2011; Past President of Kempston; now Youth Committee Chair of RC Bedford

Various projects for disadvantaged young people, educational, recreational and mental health

The Betjeman Society: retired Hon. Sec.

There are several links between Sir John's writing, the Church of England and the survival of the English Parish Church. Betjeman was a founder member of the Victorian Society, which campaigns for the protection of the neo-gothic churches, amongst other buildings, of the Victorian and Edwardian period. He was a committee member of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) which delivers an annual John Betjeman Award “for excellence in conservation at places of worship of all denominations and faiths”.

If SPAB, Victorian Society, Friends of Friendless Churches, Churches Conservation Trust, National Churches Trust and a host of smaller church preservation societies believe *it is important to maintain the nation's churches*, one has to question why the Church of England does not.

If elected to General Synod, I promise I will push for the preservation of these sacred spaces, sanctuaries to any who wish to enter, to be a high priority for the Church of England.